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Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Environment and sustainable development

Environment and sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Letter dated 9 April 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the Ministerial Declaration "Message from the Lake Biwa and Yodo River Basin", adopted at the Ministerial Conference on the occasion of the 3rd World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan, on 23 March 2003 (see annex).

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly under agenda items 44, 87 and 87 (a).

(*Signed*) Koichi **Haraguchi**
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Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 9 April 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Ministerial Declaration
--- Message from the Lake Biwa and Yodo River Basin---

23 March 2003

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation, assembled in Kyoto, Japan on 22-23 March 2003, on the occasion of the 3rd World Water Forum. Building upon the outcomes of the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), and the United Nations Secretary General's Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Biodiversity (WEHAB) initiative as well as other water-related events, we assert our common resolve to implement the appropriate recommendations in order to achieve the internationally agreed targets and goals including the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Taking note of the thematic and regional statements and recommendations from the 3rd World Water Forum, we declare the following:

[General Policy]

1. Water is a driving force for sustainable development including environmental integrity, and the eradication of poverty and hunger, indispensable for human health and welfare. Prioritizing water issues is an urgent global requirement. Each country has the primary responsibility to act. The international community as well as international and regional organizations should support this. Empowerment of local authorities and communities should be promoted by governments with due regard to the poor and gender.

2. Whilst efforts being undertaken so far on water resources development and management should be continued and strengthened, we recognize that good governance, capacity building and financing are of the utmost importance to succeed in our efforts. In this context, we will promote integrated water resources management.

3. In managing water, we should ensure good governance with a stronger focus on household and neighborhood community-based approaches by addressing equity in sharing benefits, with due regard to pro-poor and gender perspectives in water policies. We should further promote the participation of all stakeholders, and ensure transparency and

accountability in all actions.

4. We are committed, in the long term, to fortify the capacity of the people and institutions with technical and other assistance from the international community. This must include, among others, their ability to measure and monitor performance, to share innovative approaches, best practices, information, knowledge and experiences relevant to local conditions.

5. Addressing the financial needs is a task for all of us. We must act to create an environment conducive to facilitating investment. We should identify priorities on water issues and reflect them accordingly in our national development plans/sustainable development strategies including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Funds should be raised by adopting cost recovery approaches which suit local climatic, environmental and social conditions and the "polluter-pays" principle, with due consideration to the poor. All sources of financing, both public and private, national and international, must be mobilized and used in the most efficient and effective way. We take note of the report of the World Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure.

6. We should explore the full range of financing arrangements including private sector participation in line with our national policies and priorities. We will identify and develop new mechanisms of public-private partnerships for the different actors involved, while ensuring the necessary public control and legal frameworks to protect the public interests, with a particular emphasis on protecting the interests of the poor.

7. As water situations differ from region to region, we will support established regional and sub-regional efforts such as the vision of the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW) to facilitate the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Central American Integration System (SICA), and the implementation of the program of action in favor of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Recognizing the uniquely fragile nature of water resources in small island developing states, we support specific programs of collaboration such as the Caribbean Pacific Joint Program for Action on Water and Climate in Small Island Countries.

8. We reaffirm the necessity for countries to better coordinate monitoring and assessment systems at local, basin and national levels, with development of relevant national indicators where appropriate. We call

upon the United Nations, inter alia through the Commission on Sustainable Development, to take a leading role and cooperate with other organizations involved in the water sector to work in a transparent and cooperative way. We welcome the willingness of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other organizations to periodically inform the international community of aid activities in water-related areas. Ways to track progress on water issues may be usefully explored on the basis of existing facilities and relying upon information from countries and relevant UN agencies, regional development banks and other stakeholders, including civil society organizations.

9. We welcome the proposal to establish a new network of websites to follow up the Portfolio of Water Actions that will publicize actions planned and taken on water-related issues by countries and international organizations in order to share information and promote cooperation.

[Water Resources Management and Benefit Sharing]

10. As we aim to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005, we will assist developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, and countries with economies in transition, by providing tools and further required assistance. In this context, among others, we encourage regional development banks to take a facilitating role. To this end, we invite all stakeholders, including private donors and civil society organizations, concerned to participate in this process.

11. Recognizing that cooperation between riparian states on transboundary and/or boundary watercourses contributes to sustainable water management and mutual benefits, we encourage all those states to promote such cooperation.

12. We will further encourage scientific research on predicting and monitoring the global water cycle, including the effect of climate change, and develop information systems that will enable the sharing of such valuable data worldwide.

13. We will promote measures for reducing losses from distribution systems and other water demand management measures as a cost-effective way of meeting demand.

14. We will endeavor to develop and deploy non-conventional water

resources by promoting innovative and environmentally sound technologies, such as the desalination of seawater, water recycling and water harvesting.

15. We recognize the role of hydropower as one of the renewable and clean energy sources, and that its potential should be realized in an environmentally sustainable and socially equitable manner .

[Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation]

16. Achieving the target established in the MDGs to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015 and that established in the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation by 2015 requires an enormous amount of investment in water supply and sanitation. We call on each country to develop strategies to achieve these objectives. We will redouble our collective efforts to mobilize financial and technical resources, both public and private.

17. We will address water supply and sanitation in urban and rural areas in ways suitable for the respective local conditions and management capacities, with a view to achieving short-term improvement of water and sanitation services as well as cost-effective infrastructure investments and sound management and maintenance over time. In so doing, we will enhance poor people's access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

18. While basic hygiene practices starting from hand washing at the household level should be encouraged, intensified efforts should also be launched to promote technical breakthroughs, especially the development and practical applications of efficient and low-cost technologies tailored to daily life for the provision of safe drinking water and basic sanitation. We encourage studies for innovative technologies to be locally owned.

[Water for Food and Rural Development]

19. Water is essential for broad based agricultural production and rural development in order to improve food security and eradicate poverty. It should continuously contribute to a variety of roles including food production, economic growth and environmental sustainability. We are concerned with increasing pressure on the limited fresh water resources and on the environment. Noting that a diverse array of agricultural practices and agricultural economies has evolved in the world, we should make every effort to reduce unsustainable water management and improve the

efficiency of agricultural water use.

20. Through effective and equitable water use and management, and extending irrigation in areas of need, we will promote neighborhood community based development, which should result in income-generating activities and opportunities and contribute to poverty eradication in rural areas.

21. We encourage innovative and strategic investment, research and development and international cooperation for the progressive improvement of agricultural water management, by such means as demand-driven management including participatory irrigation management, rehabilitation and modernization of existing water facilities, water-harvesting, water-saving/drought-resistant crop varieties, water storage and dissemination of agricultural best practices.

22. Inland fisneries being a major source of food, freshwater fish production should be addressed through intensified efforts to improve water quality and quantity in rivers and protection or restoration of breeding areas.

[Water Pollution Prevention and Ecosystem Conservation]

23. We recognize the need to intensify water pollution prevention in order to reduce hazards to health and the environment and to protect ecosystems, including control of invasive species. We recognize traditional water knowledge and will promote the awareness of positive and negative impacts of human activities on watersheds for the entire water cycle through public information and education, including for children, in order to avoid pollution and unsustainable use of water resources.

24. To ensure a sustainable water supply of good quality, we should protect and use in a sustainable manner the ecosystems that naturally capture, filter, store, and release water, such as rivers, wetlands, forests, and soils.

25. We urge countries to review and, when necessary, to establish appropriate legislative frameworks for the protection and sustainable use of water resources and for water pollution prevention.

26. In view of the rapid degradation of watersheds and forests, we will concentrate our efforts to combat deforestation, desertification and land

degradation through programs to promote greening, sustainable forest management, the restoration of degraded lands and wetlands, and the conservation of biodiversity.

[Disaster Mitigation and Risk Management]

27. The growing severity of the impacts of floods and droughts highlights the need for a comprehensive approach that includes strengthened structural measures such as reservoirs and dikes and also non-structural measures such as land-use regulation and guidance, disaster forecasting and warning systems and national risk management systems, in harmony with the environment and different water uses, including inland waterway navigation.

28. We will cooperate to minimize damage caused by disasters through enhancing the sharing and exchange, where appropriate, of data, information, knowledge and experiences at the international level. We encourage the continuation of collaboration between scientists, water managers, and relevant stakeholders to reduce vulnerability and make the best prediction and forecasting tools available to water managers.

29. Finally, we thank the Government and people of Japan for hosting this Ministerial Conference and the Forum.